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NAVAL STORIES

William Leggett

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NAVAL STORIES.

BY WILLIAM LEGGETT,

I have loved thee, Ocean ! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy billows, onwards.

Byron.

SECOND EDITION.

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LOAN STACK

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THE ENCOUNTER.



THE ENCOUNTER.

One universal shriek there rushed,
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
Of echoing thunder ; and then all was hushed—
Save the wild wind, and the remorseless dash
Of billows.—

Byron..

THE Active, Sloop of War, had been lying all day becalmed, in mid ocean, and was rolling and pitching in a heavy ground swell, which was the only trace left of the gale she had lately encountered. The sky was of as tender and serene a blue as if it had never been deformed with clouds ; and the atmosphere was bland and pleasant, although the latitude and the season might both have led one to expect different weather. Since the morning watch, when the wind, after blowing straight an end for several days together, had died suddenly away, there had not been enough air stirring to lift the dog-vane from its staff, down which it hung in motionless repose, except when raised by the heave of the vessel, as she laboured in the trough of the sea. Her courses had been hauled up, and she lay under

her three topsails, braced on opposite tacks, ready to take advantage of the first breath of wind, from whatever quarter it might come.

The crew were disposed in various groups about the deck, some idling away in listless ease the interval of calm; some, with their clothes-bags beside them, turning it to account in overhauling their dunnage; while others moved fidgety about, on the forecastle and in the waist, eyeing, ever and anon, the horizon round, as if already weary of their short holiday on the ocean, and impatiently watching for some sign of a breeze. To a true sailor there are few circumstances more annoying than a perfect calm. The same principle of our nature which makes the traveller on land, though journeying without any definite object, desire the postilion to whip up his horses and hasten to the end of his stage, is manifested in a striking degree among seamen. The end of one voyage is but the beginning of another, and their life is a constant succession of hardships and perils; yet they cannot abide that the elements should grant them a moment's respite. As the wind dies away their spirits flag; they move heavily and sluggishly about while the calm continues; but rouse at the first whisper of the breeze, and are never gayer or more animated than when their canvass swells out to its utmost tension in the gale.

On the afternoon in question, this feeling of rest-

lessness at the continuance of the calm was not confined to the crew of the *Active*. Her commander had been nearly all day on deck, walking to and fro, on the starboard side, with quick impatient strides, or now stepping into one gangway, and now into the other, and casting anxious and searching looks into all quarters of the heavens, as if it were of the utmost consequence that a breeze should spring up and enable him to pursue his way. Indeed it was whispered among the officers, that there were reasons of state which made it important they should reach their point of destination as speedily as possible; though where that point was, or what those reasons were, not a soul on board knew, except the captain—and he was not a man likely to enlighten their ignorance on the subject. Few words, in truth, did any one ever hear from Black Jack, as the reefers nicknamed him; and when he did speak, what he said was not generally of a kind to make them desire he should often break his taciturnity.

He was a straight, tall, stern-looking man, just passed the prime of life, as might be inferred from the wrinkles on his thoughtful brow, and the slightly grizzled hue of the locks about his temples; though his hair, elsewhere, was as black as the raven. His face bore the marks both of storm and battle: it was furrowed and deeply embrowned by long exposure to every vicissitude of weather; and a deep scar across the left brow told a tale of dangers braved

and overcome. His eyes were large, black and piercing; and the habitual compression and curve of his lip indicated both firmness and haughtiness of character—indications which those who sailed with him had no reason to complain of as deceptive.

But notwithstanding his impatience, and the urgency of his mission, whatever it was, the Active continued to roll heavily about at the sport of the big round billows, which swelled up and spread and tumbled over so lazily, that their glassy surfaces were not broken by a ripple. The sun went down clear, but red and fiery; and the sky, though its blue faded to a duskier tint, still remained unflecked by a single cloud. As the broad round disk disappeared beneath the wave, all hands were called to stand by their hammocks; and when the stir and bustle incident to that piece of duty had subsided, an unwonted degree of stillness settled on the vessel. This was owing in part, no doubt, to the presence of the commander, before whom the crew were not apt to indulge in any great exuberance of merriment; but the sluggish and unusual state of the weather had probably the largest share in the effect. The captain continued on deck, pacing up and down the starboard side; the lieutenant of the watch leaned over the taffrel, his trumpet idly dangling by its becket from his arm; and the two quarter-deck midshipmen walked in the gangway, beguiling their

watch with prattle about home, or gay anticipations of the future.

“We shall have a dull and lazy night of it, Vangs,” said the master’s mate of the fore-castle, as he returned forward from adding on the log-slate another “ditto” to the long column of them which recorded the history of the day. The person he addressed stood on the heel of the bowsprit, with his arms folded on his breast, and his gaze fixed intently on the western horizon, from which the daylight had now so completely faded, that it required a practised and keen eye to discern where the sky and water met. He was a tall, square-framed, aged looking seaman, whose thick gray hair shaded a strongly marked and weather-beaten face, and whose shaggy overcoat, buttoned to the throat, covered a form that for forty years had breasted the storms and perils of every sea. He did not turn his head, nor withdraw his eyes from the spot they rested on, as he said, in a low tone, “We shall have work enough before morning, Mr. Garnet.”

“Why, where do you read that, Vangs?” inquired the midshipman—“there is nothing of the sort in my reckoning.”

“I read it in a book I have studied through many a long cruise, Mr. Garnet, and though my eyes are getting old, I think I can understand its meaning yet. Hark ye, young man, the hammocks are piped down,

and the watch is set; but there will be no watch in this night—mark my words.”

“Why, Vangs, you are turning prophet,” replied the master’s-mate, who was a rattling young fellow, full of blood and blue veins. “I shouldn’t wonder to see you strike tarpauling when the cruise is up, rig out in a Methodist’s broad brim and straight togs, and ship the next trip for parson.”

“My cruisings are pretty much over, Mr. Garnet, and my next trip, I am thinking, is one I shall have to go alone—though there’s a sign in the heavens this night makes me fear I shall have but too much company.”

“Why, what signs do you talk of, man?” asked the young officer, somewhat startled by the quiet and impressive tone and manner of the old quartermaster. “I see nothing that looks like a change of weather, and yet I see all there is to be seen.”

“I talked in the same way, once, I remember,” said Vangs, “when I was about your age, as we lay becalmed one night in the old Charlotte East India-man, heaving and pitching in the roll of a ground swell, much as we do now. The next morning found me clinging to a broken topmast, the only thing left of a fine ship of seven hundred tons, which, with every soul on board of her, except me, had gone to the bottom. That was before you were born, Mr. Garnet.”

“Such things have often been, no doubt,” said Garnet, “and such things will be again—nay, may happen as you say, before morning. But because you were once wrecked in a gale of wind that sprung up out of a calm, it is no reason that every calm is to be followed by such a gale. Show me a sign of wind, and I may believe it; but for my part, I see no likelihood of enough even to blow away the smoke of that cursed galley, which circles and dances about here on the forecastle, as if it was master’s mate of the watch, and was ordered to keep a bright look-out.”

“Turn your eye in that direction, Mr. Garnet. Do you not see a faint belt of light, no broader than my finger, that streaks the sky where the sun went down? It is not daylight, for I watched that all fade away, and the last glimmer of it was gone before that dim brassy streak began to show itself. And carry your eye in a straight line above it—do you not mark how thick and lead-like the air looks? There is that there,” said the old man, (laying his hand on the bowsprit, as he prepared to sit down between the night-heads) “will try what stuff these sticks are made of before the morning breaks.”

Young Garnet put his hand over his brow, and half shutting his eyes, peered intently in the direction the old seaman indicated; but no sign pregnant with such evil as he foreboded, or no appearance even of the wished for breeze, met his vision. Im-

puting the predictions of Vangs to those megrims which old sailors are apt to have in a long calm, or perhaps to a desire to play upon his credulity, he folded his pea-coat more closely about him, and taking his seat on the nettings in such a position that he could lean back against the fore-rigging, prepared to settle himself down in that delicious state of repose between sleeping and waking, in which he thought he might with impunity doze away such a quiet watch as his promised to be. He had scarcely closed his eyes, however, when a sound rung in his ears that made him spring to the deck, and at once dispelled all disposition to slumber. It was the clear trumpet-like voice of the captain himself, hailing the forecastle.

“Sir!” bawled the startled master’s mate.

“Have your halliards clear for running, sir!—your cluelines led along, and the men all at their stations.”

“Ay, ay, sir!” sung Garnet in reply, and then muttered to himself, “here’s the devil to pay and no pitch hot. What is the meaning of all this, I wonder? Has the skipper seen old Vangs’s streak of brass, too? or does he hope to coax the wind out, by raising such a breeze on deck?” And he stepped upon a shot box, and cast another long, searching glance into the western horizon; but there was no sign there which to his inexperienced eye boded any change of weather.

"Fo'castle, there!" again sounded from the quarter-deck, but it was now the voice of the lieutenant of the watch, hailing through his trumpet.

"Sir!" answered the mate.

"Send the fo'castle-men aloft to furl the foresail. Quarter-gunner and after-guard, do you hear! lay aloft—lay out—furl away!"

These and other similar orders were quickly obeyed, and stillness again succeeded. But the attention of all on deck was now aroused; and every one watched in silence for some less questionable forerunner of wind than was yet visible to their eyes. They all noticed, however, that the sky had grown thicker and of a dingier hue, and that not a single star peeped through the gloom. But there was not a breath of air yet stirring. The topsails continued to flap heavily against the masts, as they were swayed to and fro by the motion of the vessel; the lower yards creaked in their slings; and the ship headed now one way and now another, as she yawed and swung round, completely at the mercy of the swell. The seamen gathered in groups at their several stations, and waited in silence the result which all now began to apprehend.

But while these feelings of indefinite fear were entertained by those on deck, the watch below were disturbed by no such anxiety. The officers in the gun-room were variously occupied, according to their different tastes and inclinations; some amusing

themselves by reading, some writing, and others stretched upon the chairs or in their berths, dreaming away the interval of rest. The midshipmen in the steerage had gathered round their mess-table, and were engaged in lively chat and repartee, and in cracking nautical jokes and witticisms upon each other. Their discourse was plentifully interlarded with sea-phrases; for these juvenile sons of Neptune, however slender their seamanship in other respects, have commonly great volubility in rattling off the technicals of their profession, and a surprising facility in applying them to the ordinary topics of conversation. With the omission of a single letter, the distich describing Hudibras might be applied to them, or, if a poor pun be allowable, it may be said to fit them to a *t*, for

————— they cannot open
Their mouths, but out there falls a rope.

One of the merriest and noisiest of the group in the Active's steerage was a little, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed reefer, whose flaxen hair curled in natural ringlets around his temples, and was surmounted by a small low-crowned tarpauling hat, cocked knowingly on one side, in amusing imitation of the style of the full-grown jack tar.

"Hullo, Jigger, how does she head now?" cried the little wag to one of the messboys, as his bandy legs made their appearance down the companion ladder.

"She head ebbery which way, Misser Burton," answered the black, his shining face dilated with a prodigious grin, showing he relished the humour of the question. "It is a dead calm on deck you-know, Misser Burton, and de main yard is brace frat aback."

"O, I see," rejoined the urchin, "they have hove her to, Jigger, to give her half a lemon to keep her from fainting. She has outsailed the wind, and is lying by to wait for it."

"Lying by, indeed!" said another; "she is going like a top."

"And if she keeps on," added a third, "she will soon go as fast as the Dutchman's schooner, when she stood into port under a heavy press of bolt-ropes, the sails having blown clean out of them at sea."

"Oh, I heard of that schooner," resumed little Burton, the first speaker. "It was she that sailed so fast, that when they broke up her hatches, they found she had sailed her bottom off."

"Her skipper," interrupted another, "was both master and chief mate, and they made the duty easy by dividing it between them, watch and watch."

"Yet the Dutchman grew so thin upon it," added little Burton, "that when he got home his mother and sister could'nt both look at him at once."

"And his dog," said the other, "got so weak, it had to lean against the mast to bark."

"Come, come, take a turn there, and belay,"

cried one of the older midshipmen, who was stretched at full length upon a locker. "Come, you have chased that joke far enough. Heave about, and see if you can't give us something better on t'other tack."

"Well, Tom Derrick, if you don't like our rigs, tip us a twist, yourself. Come, spin us a yarn, my boy, if you have your jaw-tacks aboard."

"No, no, Charley Burton, I can't pay out any slack to-night. I am as sleepy as a lookout in a calm. My eyes feel like the marine's when his cue was served so taught, he could'nt make his eyelids meet. Hullo, Jigger, rouse out my hammock from that heap and hang it up—you know which it is, don't you?"

"Ki! I wish I had as much tobacco as I know which Misser Derrick's hammock is!" eagerly replied the negro.

This characteristic speech produced a hearty burst of laughter; and in chat and merriment of this sort the evening slipped away, until the hour for extinguishing the lights arrived, and the quarter-master came down to douse the glim.

"Well, Vangs," cried the ever ready Burton, "it is blowing an Irishman's hurricane on deck, is'nt it—straight up and down, like a pig's eye?"

"It is all quiet yet," replied Vangs, "but the sky has a queer look, and there will be a hurricane of a

different sort before you are many hours older, Mr. Charles."

"Is there really any prospect of wind?" asked the midshipman we have called Derrick.

"There is something brewing in the clouds we none of us understand," answered the old man, in his low quiet tone. "We shall have more wind than we want before long, or I am out in my reckoning."

"Let it come but-end foremost, if it chooses, and the sooner the better," said young Burton, laughing; "any weather rather than this; for this is neither fish, flesh, nor red herring. Let it blow, Vangs, and I would'nt mind if it were such a breeze as you had in the old Charlotte, you know, when it blew the sheet-anchor into the foretop, and took three men to hold the captain's hair on his head."

The old quarter-master turned a grave and thoughtful look on the round face of the lively boy, and seemed meditating an answer that might repress what probably struck him as untimely mirth; but even while he was in the act to speak, the tempest he had predicted burst in sudden fury upon the vessel. The first indication those below had of its approach was the wild rushing sound of the gust, which broke upon their ears like the roar of a volcano. The heaving and rolling of the ship ceased all at once, as if the waves had been subdued and chained down by the force of a mighty pressure. The vessel stood motionless an instant, as if instinct

with life, and cowering in conscious fear of the approaching strife; the tempest then burst upon her but-end foremost, as Burton expressed it, and the stately mass reeled and fell over before it, like a tower struck down by a thunderbolt. 'The surge was so violent that the ship was thrown almost on her beam-ends, and every thing on board, not secured in the strongest manner, was pitched with great force to leeward. Midshipmen, mess-table, hammocks, and the contents of the mess lockers, fell rustling, rattling, and mixed in strange disorder, to the lee-scuppers; and when the ship slowly righted, straining and trembling in every plank, it was a moment or two before those who had been so unexpectedly heaped together in the bends, could extricate themselves from the confusion, and make their way to the upper deck.

There, a scene of fearful grandeur was presented. The sky was of a murky, leaden hue, and appeared to bend over the ship in a nearer and narrower arch, binding the ocean in so small a round, that the eye could trace, through the whole circle, the line where the sickly looking heaven rested on the sea. The air was thick and heavy; and the water, covered with driving snow-like foam, seemed to be packed and flattened down by the fury of the blast, which scattered its billows into spray as cutting as the sleet of a December storm. The wind howled and screamed through the rigging with an appalling

sound, that might be likened to the shrieks and wailings of angry fiends; and the ship fled before the tempest, like an affrighted thing, with a velocity that piled the water in a huge bank around her bows, and sent it off, whirling and sparkling, in lines of dazzling whiteness, soon lost in the general hue of the ocean, which resembled a wild waste of drifting snow.

There was one on deck, however, who had foreseen this awful change, and made preparations to meet it; and when the tempest burst, in full, fell sloop, upon his ship, it found nothing but the bare hull and spars to oppose its tremendous power. Every sail had been closely and securely furled, except the forestorm staysail, which was set for a reason that seamen will understand; but being hauled well aft by both sheets, it was stretched stiffly amidships, and presented nothing but the bolt rope for the wind to act upon. The masts and yards, with their snug and well-bound rolls of canvass, alone encountered the hurricane. But even these were tried to the uttermost. The topmasts bent and creaked before the blast, and the royal poles of the topgallantmasts, which extended above the crosstrees, whipped and thrashed about like pliant rods. The running rigging rattled against the spars, and the shrouds and backstays strained and cracked, as if striving to draw the strong bolts which secured them to the vessel.

For more than an hour did the Active flee along in this way, like a wild horse foaming and stretching at his utmost speed, driven onward in the van of the tempest, and exposed to its fiercest wrath. At length, the first fury of the gale passed away, and the wind, though still raging tempestuously, swept over her with less appalling force. The ocean, now, as if to revenge itself for its constrained inactivity, roused from its brief repose, and swelled into billows that rolled and chased each other with the wild glee of ransomed demons. Wave upon wave, in multitudinous confusion, came roaring in from astern; and their white crests, leaping, and sparkling, and hissing, formed a striking feature in the scene. The wind, fortunately, issued from the right point, and drove the Active towards her place of destination. The dun pall of clouds, which from the commencement of the gale, had totally overspread the heavens, except in the quarter whence the blast proceeded, now began to give way, and a reddish light shone out here and there, in long horizontal streaks, like the glow of expiring coals between the bars of a furnace. Though the first dreadful violence of the storm was somewhat abated, it still raved with too much fierceness and power to admit of any relaxation of vigilance. The commander himself still retained the trumpet, and every officer stood in silence at his station, clinging to whatever might assist him to maintain his difficult footing.

"Light, oh!" cried the lookout on one of the cat-heads.

"Where away?" demanded the captain.

"Dead ahead."

"What does it look like, and how far off?" shouted the captain, in a loud and earnest voice.

"Can see nothing now, sir; the glim is doused."

"Here, Mr. Burton," cried the commander, "take this night glass; jump aloft on the foreyard, sir, and see if you can make out any object ahead. Hurry up, hurry up, and let me hear from you immediately, sir! Lay aft to the braces! Forecastle, there! have hands by your staysail sheets on both sides! foreyard, there!"——

But before the captain had finished his hail, the voice of little Burton was heard, singing out, "sail oh!"

"What does she look like, and where away?"

"A large vessel lying to under bare poles—starboard your helm, sir, quick—hard a starboard, or you will fall aboard of her!"

This startling intelligence was hardly communicated before the vessel descried from aloft loomed suddenly into sight from deck through the thick weather to leeward. Her dusk and shadowy form seemed to rise up from the ocean, so suddenly did it open to view, as the driving mist was scattered for a moment. She lay right athwart the Active's bows, and almost under her fore-foot—as it seemed

while she pitched into the trough of an enormous sea—and the *Active* rode on the ridge of the succeeding wave, which curled above the chasm, as if to overwhelm the vessel beneath.

“Starboard your helm, quarter-master! hard a-starboard!” cried the commander of the *Active*, in a tone of startling energy.

“Starboard!” repeated the deep solemn voice of old Vangs, who stood on the quarter-nettings, his tall figure propped against the mizen rigging, and his arm wreathed round the shroud.

“Jump to the braces, men!” continued the captain strenuously—“haul in your starboard braces, haul!—ease off your larboard! does she come to, quarter-master?—Fo’castle there! ease off your larboard staysail sheet—let all go, sir!”

These orders were promptly obeyed, but it was too late for them to avail. The wheel, in the hands of four stout and experienced seamen, was forced swiftly round, and the effect of the rudder was assisted by a pull of the starboard braces; but in such a gale, and under bare poles, the helm exerted but little power over the driving and ponderous mass. She had headed off hardly a point from her course, when she was taken up by a prodigious surge, and borne onward with fearful velocity. The catastrophe was now inevitable. In an instant the two ships fell together, their massive timbers crashing with the fatal force of the concussion. A wild

shriek ascended from the deck of the stranger, and woman's shrill voice mingled with the sound. All was now confusion and uproar on board both vessels. The Active had struck the stranger broad on the bows, while the bowsprit of the latter, rushing in between the foremast and the starboard fore-rigging of the Active, had snapped her shrouds and stays, and torn up the bolts and chainplates, as if they had been thread and wire. Staggering back from the shock, she was carried to some distance by a reflux wave, which suddenly subsiding, she gave such a heavy lurch to port that the foremast—now wholly unsupported on the starboard side—snapped short off like a withered twig, and fell with a loud splash into the ocean.

"The foremast is gone by the board!" shouted the officer of the fore-castle.

"My God!" exclaimed the captain, "and Charles Burton has gone with it! Fo'castle there! Did Charles Burton come down from the foreyard?"

"Burton! Burton! Burton!" called twenty voices, and "Burton!" was shouted loudly over the side; but there was no reply!

In the mean while another furious billow lifted the vessel on its crest, and the two ships closed again, like gladiators, faint and stunned, but still compelled to do battle. The bows of the stranger this time drove heavily against the bends of the Active just abaft her main-rigging, and her bowsprit darted

quivering in over the bulwarks, as if it were the arrowy tongue of some huge sea monster. At this instant a wild sound of agony, between a shriek and groan, was heard in that direction, and those who turned to ascertain its cause saw, as the vessels again separated, a human body, swinging and writhing at the stranger's bowsprit head. The vessel heaved up into the moonlight, and showed the face of poor Vangs, the quarter-master, his back apparently crushed and broken, but his arms clasped round the spar, to which he appeared to cling with convulsive tenacity. The bowsprit had caught him on its end as it ran in over the Active's side, and driving against the mizzenmast, deprived the poor wretch of all power to rescue himself from the dreadful situation. While a hundred eyes were fastened in a gaze of horror on the impaled seaman, thus dangling over the boiling ocean, the strange ship again reeled forward, as if to renew the terrible encounter. But her motion was now slow and labouring. She was evidently settling by the head; she paused in mid career, gave a heavy drunken lurch to starboard, till her topmasts whipped against the rigging of her antagonist, then rising slowly on the ridge of the next wave, she plunged head foremost, and disappeared for ever. One shriek of horror and despair rose through the storm—one wild delirious shriek! The waters swept over the drowning wretches, and hushed their gurgling cry. Then all

was still!—all but the rush and whirl of waves as they were sucked into the vortex, and the voice of the storm, which howled its wild dirge above the spot.

When day dawned on the ocean, the *Active* presented a different appearance from that which she exhibited but a few short hours before. Her foremast gone, her bowsprit sprung, her topgallantmasts struck, her bulwarks shattered, her rigging hanging loose, and whitened by the wash of the spray—she looked little like the gay and gallant thing which, at the same hour of the previous day, had ploughed her course through the sea, despite the adverse gale, and moved proudly along under a cloud of canvass, as if she defied the fury of the elements. Now, how changed! how sad the contrast! The appearance of such of the officers and crew as were moving about the deck harmonized with that of the vessel. They looked pale and dejected; and the catastrophe they had witnessed had left traces of horror stamped on every brow. The *Active* was still near the spot of the fatal event, having been lying to under a close reefed mainsail, which the lulling of the wind had enabled her to bear. As the dawn advanced, the upper deck became crowded, and long and searching looks were cast over the ocean in every direction, in the hope to discover some vestige of those who had met their doom during the night. Such of the boats as had not been staved

were lowered, and long and patient efforts were made to discover traces of the wreck. But the search was fruitless, and was at last reluctantly abandoned. The boats were again hauled up and stowed; the *Active* filled away, and under such sail as she could carry in her crippled state, crept forward towards her goal. During the rest of her voyage no merry laugh, no lively prattle, cheered the steerage mess-table. The bright eyes of Charles Burton were closed—his silvery voice was hushed—his gay heart was cold—and his messmates mourned his timeless fate with real sorrow.

In a few days, the *Sloop of War* reached her port, and was immediately warped to the dock-yard, where she was stripped, hove down, and thoroughly overhauled. The officers and crew lent themselves earnestly to the duty, and a short time served to accomplish it. In less than a week, every thing set up and all a-taunto, the ship hauled out again, gleaming with fresh paint, and looking as proud and stately as before the disaster. But where was she that had been wrecked in the encounter? Where and who were those that perished with her? Fond hearts were doubtless eagerly awaiting them, and anxious eyes strained over the ocean “to hail the bark that never could return.” No word, no whisper ever told their fate. They who saw them perish knew not the victims, and the deep gave not up its dead.

A NIGHT AT GIBRALTAR.

The
Gibraltar
of Octo
through
and its
scenery
had had
for the v
the right
and bou
steed the
with the
quotat

A NIGHT AT GIBRALTAR.

The mists boil up around me, and the clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep hell.

* * * * *

I am most sick at heart—nay, grasp me not—
I am all feebleness—the mountains whirl
Spinning around me—I grow blind—What art thou?

Byron.

THE first time I ever saw the famous Rock of Gibraltar was on a glorious afternoon in the month of October. The sun diffused just heat enough through the air to give it an agreeable temperature, and its soft and somewhat hazy light, showed the scenery of the Straits to the best advantage. We had had a rough, but uncommonly short passage; for the wind, though tempestuous, had blown from the right quarter; and our gallant frigate dashed and bounded over the waves before it, "like a steed that knows his rider." I could not then add with the poet, from whom I have borrowed this quotation, "Welcome to their roar!" for I was a novice on the ocean in those days, and had not entirely recovered from certain uneasy sensations

about the region of the epigastrium, which by no means rendered the noise of rushing waters the most agreeable sound to my ears, or the rolling of the vessel the most pleasant motion for my body. Never did old sea-dog of a sailor, in the horse latitudes, pray more sincerely for a wind, than I did for a calm, during that boisterous passage; and never, I may add, did the selfish prayer of a sinner prove less availing. The gale kept "due on the Propontic and the Hellespont," and it blew so hard that it sometimes seemed to lift our old craft almost out of water. When we came out of port, we had had our dashy fair-weather spars aloft, with skysail yards athwart, a moonsail to the main, and hoist enough for the broad blue to show itself above that. But before the pilot left us, our topgallant-poles were under the boom-cover, and storm-stumps in their places; and the first watch was scarcely relieved, when the boatswain's call—repeated by four mates, whose lungs seemed formed on purpose to outroar a tempest—rang through the ship, "All hands to house topgallantmasts, ahoy!" From that time till we made the land, the gale continued with unintermitted violence, to the great delight of the old tars, and the manifest annoyance of the green reefers, of whom we had rather an unusual number on board. If my pen were endued with the slightest portion of the quality which distinguished Hogarth's pencil, I might

here give a description of a man-of-war's steerage in a storm, which should force a smile from the most saturnine reader. I must own I did not much relish the humour of the scene then—*pars magna fui*—that is, I was sea-sick myself; but often since, sometimes in my hammock, sometimes during a cold mid-watch on deck, I have burst into a hearty laugh, as the memory of our grotesque distresses, and of the odd figures we cut during that passage, has glanced across my mind.

But the longest day must have an end, and the stillest breeze cannot last for ever. The wind, which for a fortnight had been blowing as hard as a trumpeter for a wager, blew itself out at last. About dawn one morning it began to lull, and by the time the sun was fairly out of the water, it fell flat calm. It was my morning watch, and what with sea-sickness, hard duty, and having been cabined, cribbed, confined for so long a time in my narrow and unaccustomed lodgings, I felt worn out, and in no mood to exult in the choice I had made of a profession. I stood holding by one of the belaying pins of the main fife-rail, for I had not yet, as the sailors phrase it, got my sea-legs aboard, and I looked, I suppose, as melancholy as a sick monkey on a lee backstay, when a cry from the foretopsail-yard reached my ear, that instantly thrilled to my heart, and set the blood running in a lively current through my veins. "Land, oh!" cried the jack-tar on the lookout, in a cable-

tier voice, which seemed to issue from the bottom of his stomach. I have heard many delightful sounds in my time, but few which seemed pleasanter than the rough voice of that vigilant sailor. I do verily believe, that not seven bells (grog time of day) to a thirsty tar, the dinner bell to a hungry alderman, or the passing bell of some rich old curmudgeon to a prodigal heir, ever gave greater rapture. The how-d'ye-do of a friend, the good-by of a country cousin, the song of *the* Signorina, and Paganini's fiddle, may all have music in them; but the cry of land to a sea-sick midshipman is sweeter than them all.

We made what, in nautical language, is termed a good land-fall—so good, indeed, that it was well for us the night and the wind both ceased when they did; for, had they lasted another hour, we should have found ourselves *landed*, and in a way that even I, much as I wished to set my foot once more on terra firma, should not have relished very much. On its becoming light enough to ascertain our whereabouts, it was discovered that we were within the very jaws of the Straits, completely land-locked by the “steepy shore,” where

“Europe and Afric on each other gaze;”

and already beginning to feel the influence of the strong and ceaseless easterly current which rushes into the Mediterranean through that passage at the rate of four or five knots an hour. A gentle land-

breeze sprung up in the course of the morning watch, which, though not exactly fair, yet coming from the land of the "dusky Moor," had enough of southing in it to enable us, with the set of the current, to get along tolerably well, beating with a long and a short leg through the Straits.

But there is no reason that I should make my story of the passage as tedious as the reality; so, here's for a fair breeze and square away! And now, let the reader fancy himself riding at anchor in the beautiful but unsafe bay of Gibraltar, directly opposite and almost within the very shadow of the grand and gigantic fortress, which nature and art have vied with each other in rendering impregnable. No one who has looked on that vast and fortified rock, with its huge granite outline shown in bold relief against the clear sky of the south of Europe—its towering and ruin-crowned peaks—its enormous crags, caverns, and precipices—and its rich historical associations, shedding a powerful though vague interest over every feature—can easily forget the impression which that imposing and magnificent spectacle creates. The flinty mass rising abruptly to an elevation of fifteen hundred feet, and surrounded on every side by the waters of the Mediterranean, save a narrow slip of level sand which stretches from its northern end and connects it with the main land, has, added to its other claims to admiration, the strong interest of utter insolation.

For a while, the spectator gazes on the "stupendous whole" with an expression of pleased wonder at its height, extent, and strength, and without becoming conscious of the various opposite features which make up its grand effect of sublimity and beauty. He sees only the giant rock spreading its vast dark mass against the sky, its broken and wavy ridge, its beetling projections, its "steep down gulfs," and dizzy precipices of a thousand feet perpendicular descent. After a time, his eye becoming in some degree familiarized with the main and sterner features of the scene, he perceives that the granite mountain is variegated by here and there some picturesque work of art, or spot of green beauty, smiling with surpassing loveliness in contrast with the savage roughness around it. Dotted about at long intervals over the steep sides of the craggy mass, are seen the humble cottages of the soldiers' wives, or, perched on the very edges of the cliffs, the guard-houses of the garrison; before which, ever and anon, may be descried the vigilant sentry, dwindled to a pigmy, walking to and fro on his allotted and dangerous post. Now and then, the eye detects a more sumptuous edifice, half hid in a grove of acacias, orange, and almond trees, clustering around it, as if to shut from the view of its inhabitant, in his cyrie-like abode, the scene of desolate grandeur above, beneath him, and on every side. At the foot of the rock, on a small and narrow slip, less precipitous than the rest, stands the

town of Gibraltar, which, as seen from the bay, with its dark-coloured houses, built in the Spanish style, and rising one above another in ampitheatrical order; the ruins of the Moorish castle and defences in the rear; and the high massive walls which enclose it at the water's edge, and which, thick-planted with cannon, seem formed to "laugh a seige to scorn," has a highly picturesque effect. The military works of Gibraltar are on a scale of magnificence commensurate with the natural grandeur of the scene. Its walls, its batteries, and its moles, which, bristling with cannon, stretch far out into the bay, and against whose solid structures the waves spend their fury in vain, are works of art planned with great genius, and executed with consummate skill. An indefinite sensation of awe mixes with the stranger's feelings, as gazing upon the defences which every where meet his eye, he remembers, that the strength of Gibraltar consists not in its visible works alone, but that, hewn in the centre of the vast and perpendicular rock, there are long galleries and ample chambers, where the engines of war are kept always ready, and whence, at any moment, the fires of death may be poured down upon an assailant.

Though the rock is the chief feature of interest in the bay of Gibraltar, yet, when fatigued by long gazing on its barren and solitary grandeur, there are not wanting other objects on which the eye of the stranger may repose with pleasure. The green

shores of Andalusia, encircling the bay in their semi-circular sweep, besides the attraction which verdant hills and valleys always possess, have the super-added charm of being linked with many classical and romantic associations. The picturesque towns of St. Roque and Algesiras, the one crowning a smooth eminence at some distance from the shore, and the other occupying a gentle declivity that sinks gradually down to the sparkling waters of the bay—the mountains of Spain, fringed with cork forests, in the back ground—the dimly seen coast of Morocco across the Straits, with the white walls of Ceuta just discernible on one of its promontories—the towering form of Abila, which not even the unromantic modern name of Apes-hill can divest of all its interest as one of “the trophies of great Hercules”—these are all attractive features in the natural landscape, and, combined, render it a scene of exceeding beauty.

The clear blue waters of the bay itself commonly present an appearance of great variety and animation. Here may at all times be seen, moored closely together, a numerous fleet of vessels, from every quarter of the globe, of every fashion of structure, and manned by beings of every creed, land, and colour. The flags and pennons which float from their masts, the sounds which rise from their decks, and the appearance and employments of the moving throngs upon them, all tend to heighten the charm

of novelty and variety. In one place, may be seen, perhaps, a shattered and dismantled hulk, on board of which some exiled Spanish patriot, with his family, has taken refuge, dwelling there full in the sight of his native land, which yet he can scarcely hope ever to tread again: in another—on the high latticed stern of a tall, dark-looking craft, whose raking masts, black bends, and trig, warlike appearance excite a doubt whether she be merchantman or pirate—a group of Turks, in their national and beautiful costume, smoking their long chiboques with an air of as much gravity as if they were engaged in a matter on which their lives, or the lives of their whole race, depended. Beside them lies a heavy, clumsy dogger, on board of which a company of industrious, slow-moving Dutchmen are engaged in trafficking away their cargo of cheese, butter, Bologna sausages, and real Schiedam; and not far away from these, a crew of light-hearted Genoese sailors are stretched at length along the deck of their polacca, chanting, in voices made musical by distance, one of the rich melodies with which their language abounds. Boats are continually passing hither and thither between the vessels and the shore; and every now and then, a long and slender felucca, with its slanting yards, and graceful lateen sails, glides across the bay, laden with the products of the fruitful soil of Andalusia, which are destined to sup-

ply the tables of the pent-up inhabitants of the garrison.

I have mentioned that it was on a fine day in October that we arrived at Gibraltar, and I have accordingly sketched the Rock, and the adjacent scenery, as they appeared to me through the mellow light of that pleasant afternoon. To one viewing the scene from a different point from that which I occupied, our own gallant frigate would have presented no unattractive object in the picture. While we were beating through the Straits, the gunner's crew had been employed in blacking the bends, somewhat rusty from the constant wash of a stormy sea; and we had embraced the opportunity of the gentle land breeze to replace our taunt fair-weather poles, and to bend and send aloft topgallant-sails, royals, and skysails, for which there had not before been any recent occasion. Thus renewed, and all a-taunto, with our glossy sides glistening in the sun, our flags flying, and the broad blue streaming at the main, there was no object in all that gay and animated bay on which the eye could rest with greater pleasure. The bustle consequent upon coming to anchor was, among our active and disciplined crew, of but brief duration. In a very few minutes, every yard was squared with the nicest precision; every rope hauled taught, and laid down in a handsome Flemish coil upon the deck; and the

vast symmetrical bulk, with nothing to indicate its recent buffetings with the storm, lay floating quietly on the bright surface,

"As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean."

I had been on duty ever since the previous midnight, but I felt no disposition to go below. For more than an hour after the boatswain piped down, I remained on deck, gazing, with unsated eyes, on the various and attractive novelties around me. A part of the fascination of the scene was doubtless owing to that feeling of young romance, which invests every object with the colours of the imagination; and a part, to its contrast with the dull and monotonous prospect to which I had lately been confined, till my heart fluttered, like a caged bird, to be once more among the green trees and rustling grass—to see fields covered with golden grain, and swelling away in their fine undulations—to scent the pleasant odour of the meadows, and range at will through those leafy forests, which, I began to think, were ill exchanged for the narrow and heaving deck of a forty-four. Thoughts of this kind mingled with my musings, as I leaned over the taffarel, with my eyes bent on the verdant hills and slopes of Spain; and so absorbed was I in contemplation, that I heard not my name pronounced, till it was repeated two or three times, by the officer of the deck.

"Mr. Transom!" cried he, in a quick and im-

patient voice, "are you deaf or asleep, sir? Here, jump into the first cutter alongside! Would you keep the commodore waiting all-day?"

I felt my cheek redden at this speech of the lieutenant—one of those popinjays who, dressed in a little brief authority, think to show their own consequence by playing off impertinent airs upon those of inferior station. I had seen enough of naval service, however, to know that no good comes of replying to the insolence of a superior; so, suppressing the answer that rose to my lips, I hastened down the side into the boat, in the stern-sheets of which my commander was already seated.

"Shove off, sir," said he.

"Let fall! give way!" cried I to the men, who sprang to their oars with alacrity, making the boat skim through the water lightly and fleetly as a swallow through the air. In five minutes we were floating alongside the stone quay at the Water-Port—as the principal and strongly fortified entrance to the garrison from the bay is called.

"You will wait here for me," said the commodore, as he stepped out of the boat. "Should I not return before the gate is closed, pull round to the Ragged-Staff," (the name of the other landing-place,) "and wait there."

"Ay, ay, sir." But though I answered promptly, and with a tone of alacrity, I was not, in truth, very well pleased at the prospect of a long and

tedious piece of service, fatigued as I already was with my vigil of the previous night, and the active duties of the day. Little cared the old commodore, however, whether I was pleased or offended. Without honouring me with a look, he turned away as he gave the order, and stepping quickly over the drawbridge which connects the quay with the fortress, disappeared under the massive archway of the gate.

For a while, the scene at the Water-Port afforded abundant amusement. The quay, beside which our boat was lying, is a small octangular wharf, constructed of huge blocks of granite, strongly cemented together. It is the only place which boats, except those belonging to the garrison, or national vessels in the harbour, are permitted to approach; and though but a few yards square in extent, is enfiladed in several directions by frowning batteries of granite, mounted with guns, of which a single discharge would shiver the whole structure to atoms. Merchant vessels lying in the bay are unloaded by means of lighters, which, with the boats of passage continually plying between the shipping and the shore, and the market-boats from the adjacent coast of Spain, all crowd round this narrow quay, rendering it a place of singular business and bustle. As the sunset hour approaches, the activity and confusion increases. Crowds of people, of all nations, and every variety of costume and language, jostle

each other as they hurry through the gate. The stately Greek, in his embroidered jacket, rich purple cap, and flowing capote, strides carelessly along. The Jew, with bent head, shaven crown, and coarse, though not unpicturesque gaberdine, glides with a noiseless step through the crowd, turning from side to side quick wary glances from underneath his downcast brows. The Moor, wrapped close in his white bernoise, stalks sullenly apart, as if he alone had no business in the stirring scene; while the noisy Spaniard at his side wages an obstreperous argument, or shouts in loud guttural sounds for his boat. French, English, and Americans, officers, merchants, and sailors, are all intermingled in the motley mass, each engaged in his own business, and each adding his part to the Babel-like clamour of tongues. High on the walls, the sentinels, with their arms glistening in the sun, walk to and fro on their posts, and look down with indifference or abstraction on the scene of hurry and turmoil beneath them.

Among the various striking figures that attracted my attention, as I reclined in the stern-sheets of the cutter, gazing on the shifting throng before me, there was one the appearance and manners of whom awakened peculiar interest. He was a tall, muscular, dark-looking Spaniard, whose large frame, and strong and well proportioned limbs were set off to good advantage by the national dress of the pea-

santry of his country. His sombrero, slouched in a studied manner over his eyes, as if to conceal their fierce rolling balls, shaded a face, the sun-burnt hue of which showed that it had not always been so carefully protected. From the crimson sash which was bound round his waist, concealing the connexion of his embroidered velvet jacket with his nether garments, a long knife depended; and this, together with a sinister expression of countenance, and an indescribable something in the general air and bearing of the man, created an impression which caused me to shrink involuntarily from him whenever he approached the boat. He himself seemed actuated by similar feelings. On first meeting my eye, he drew his sombrero deeper over his brow, and hastily retired to another part of the quay; but every now and then I could see his dark face above a group of the intervening throng, and his keen black eyes seemed always directed towards me, till, perceiving that I noticed him, he would turn away, and mix again among the remoter portion of the crowd.

I endeavoured to follow this singular figure in one of his windings through the multitude, when my attention was drawn in another direction by a loud, long call from a bugle, sounded within the walls, and, in an instant after, repeated with a clearer and louder blast from their summit. This signal gave new motion and activity to the crowd. A few hurried from the quay into the garrison, but a greater

number poured from the interior, and hastily crossed the drawbridge to the quay, and all appeared anxious to depart. Boat after boat was drawn up, received its burden, and darted off, while others took their places, and were in turn soon filled by the retiring crowd. Soldiers from the garrison came out upon the quay to urge the tardy into quicker motion; mingled shouts, calls, and curses resounded on every side; and for a few minutes confusion seemed worse confounded. But in a short time the last loiterer was hurried away—the last felucca shoved off, and was seen gliding on its course, the sound of its oars almost drowned in the noisy gabble of its Andalusian crew. As soon as the quay became entirely deserted, the military returned within the walls, and a pause of silence ensued—then pealed the sunset gun from the summit of the rock—the drawbridge, by some unseen agency, was rolled slowly back, till it disappeared within the arched passage—the ponderous gates turned on their enormous hinges—and Gibraltar was closed for the night against the world.

Thus shut out at the Water-Port, I directed the boat's crew, in compliance with my orders, to pull round to the Ragged-Staff. The wall at this place is of great height, and near its top is left a small gate, at an elevation of fifty or sixty feet above the quay, which projects into the bay beneath. It is attained by a spiral staircase, erected about twenty feet from the wall, and communicating with it at the

top by means of a drawbridge. This gate is little used, except for the egress of those who are permitted to leave the garrison after nightfall. On reaching the quay, I sprang ashore, and walking to a favourable position, endeavoured to amuse myself once more by contemplating from this new point of view the hills and distant mountains of Spain. But the charm was now fled. Night was fast stealing over the landscape, and rendering its features misty and indistinct: a change, too, had taken place in my own feelings, since, a few hours before, I had found so much pleasure in dwelling on the scene around me. I was now cold, fatigued, and hungry: my eyes had been fed with novelties until they were weary with gazing: my mind had been crowded with a succession of new images, until its vigour was exhausted. I cast my eyes up to the Rock, but it appeared cold and desolate in the deepening twilight, and I turned from its steep, flinty sides, and dreadful precipices, with a shudder. The waves and ripples of the bay, which the increasing evening wind had roughened, broke against the quay where I was standing with a sound that created a chilly sensation at my heart. Even the watch-dog's bark, from on board some vessel in the bay, gave me no pleasure, as it was borne faintly to my ear by the eastern breeze; for it was associated with sounds of home, and awakened me to a painful consciousness of the distance I had wandered, and the fatigues and

perils to which I was exposed ; and a train of sombre thoughts, despite my efforts to drive them away, took possession of my mind.

At length, yielding to their influence, I climbed to the top of a rude heap of stones, which had been piled on the end of the pier, and seating myself where my eye could embrace every portion of the shadowy landscape, I gave free rein to melancholy fancies. My wandering thoughts roamed over a thousand subjects ; but one subject predominated over all. My memory recalled many images ; but one image it presented with the vividness of life, and dwelt on with the partiality of love. It was the image of one who had been the object of my childhood's love, whom I had loved in boyhood, and whom now, in opening manhood, I still loved with a passionate and daily increasing affection. Linked with the memory of that sweet being, came thoughts of the rival who had sought to win her heart from me, and who, foiled in his purpose, had conceived and avowed the bitterest enmity to me :—and from him, my thoughts glided, under the influence of some strange association, to the tall and singular-looking Spaniard whom I had seen at the Water-Port. In this way my vagrant meditations ranged from topic to topic, with all that wildness of transition which is sometimes produced by the excitement of opium.

While thus engaged, I know not how long a time slipped by ; but at length my thoughts

began to grow less distinct, and my eyes to feel heavy; and had I not been restrained by a sense of shame and duty as an officer, I should have been glad to resign myself to sleep. My eyelids, in despite of me, did once or twice close for an instant or two; and it was in an effort to arouse myself from one of these little attacks of somnolency, that I was startled by seeing an object before me, the appearance of whom in that place struck me with surprise. The moon had risen, and was just shedding a thin and feeble glimmer over the top of the Rock, the broad deep shadow of which extended almost to the spot where I was sitting. Emerging from this shadow, I saw approaching me the identical Spaniard whose malign expression of countenance and general appearance had so strongly attracted my attention at the Water-Port. That it was the same I could not doubt, for his height, his dress, his air, all corresponded exactly. He had the same long peculiar step; he still wore the same large sombrero, which, as before, was drawn deep over his brows; the same glistening knife was thrust through his sash; and the same fantastically stamped leather gaiters covered his legs. He approached close to me, and in a voice, which, though hardly above a whisper, thrilled me to the bone, informed me that the commodore had sent for me, and bade me follow him. As he spoke these words he turned away, and walked towards the garrison. Shall I own it gentle read

er?—A sensation of fear crept over me at the idea that I was to follow this herculean and sinister-looking Spaniard, and I had some faint misgivings whether I ought to obey his summons. But I reflected that he was probably a servant or messenger of some officer or family where the commodore was visiting; that he could have no motive to mislead me; and that, were I to neglect obeying the order through apprehension of its bearer, because he was tall, had whiskers, and wore a sombrero, I should deservedly bring down upon myself the ridicule of every midshipman in the Mediterranean. Besides, thought I, how foolish should I feel, if it should turn out, as is very likely, that this is some ball or party to which the commodore has been urged to stay, and, unwilling to keep me waiting for him so long in this dreary place, he has sent to invite me to join him. This last reflection turned the scale; so slipping down from my perch, I followed towards the gate. The form of the stranger had already disappeared in the shadow of the Rock; but on reaching the foot of the spiral staircase which led up to the drawbridge, I could hear his heavy tread ascending the steps. Directly after, the gate was unbarred, the bridge lowered, and a footstep crossing it announced that the Spaniard was within the walls. I followed as rapidly as I could, and got within the gate just in time to see the form of my conductor disappear round one of the angles of the fortifica-

tions; but quickening my pace, I overtook him as he reached the foot of a path which seemed to ascend towards the southern end of the Rock.

"'This way lies the town," said I, pointing in the opposite direction; "you surely have mistaken the route."

The Spaniard made no answer, but pointed with his hand up the narrow and difficult path, and beckoning me to follow him, began the ascent. The moon shone on his countenance for a moment as he turned towards me, and I thought I could perceive that the sinister expression which had been one of the first things that drew my attention to him, was now aggravated into a smile of more decided malignity. I continued to follow, however, and struggled hard to overtake him. But the path was steep and very rugged, and my conductor walked with great speed. His footing seemed sure as that of the mountain goat. I became wearied, exhausted, almost ready to drop with fatigue, and with all my efforts was unable to diminish the interval between us. The ascent continually grew more difficult, and it soon became so steep, indeed, that I could scarcely clamber up it. My feet were bruised through the thin soles of my pumps, and in toiling on my hands and knees over some of the most abrupt pitches, the jagged points of the rock penetrated my flesh. After thus slowly and painfully groping my way for a considerable distance, we at length reach-

ed a place where the path pursued a level course—but what a path! what a place! A narrow ledge, scarce two feet wide, had been formed, partly by nature, partly by art, at the height of a thousand feet above the water, around a sweep of the rock where it rose perpendicularly from its base to its extreme summit. This ledge was covered with loose stones, which, at every step, fell rattling and thundering down the mighty precipice, till the sound died away in the immense depths below. I could not conjecture whither the Spaniard was leading me; but I had now gone too far to think of retreating. Every step was now at the hazard of life. The ledge was so narrow, the loose stones which covered it rolled so easily from under my feet, and my knees trembled so violently from fear and fatigue, that I could scarcely hope to continue much further in safety over such a pathway. At last we reached a broader spot. I sunk down exhausted, yet with a feeling of joy that I had escaped from the perilous path I had just been treading. The Spaniard stood beside me, and I thought a smile of malign satisfaction played round his lips as he looked down upon me, panting at his feet. He suffered me to rest but a moment, when he motioned me to rise. I obeyed the signal, as if it were the behest of my evil genius.

“Look round you,” said he, “and tell me what you behold!”

I glanced my eyes round, and shuddering, with-

drew them from the fearful prospect. The ledge or platform on which we were standing was but a few feet square; behind, a large and gloomy cavern opened its black jaws; and in front, the rock descended to the sea with so perpendicular a front, that a stone, dropped from its edge, would have fallen without interruption straight down into the waves.

"Are you ready to make the leap?" said the Spaniard, in a smooth, sneering tone, seeing, and seeming to enjoy, the terror of my countenance.

"For heaven's sake," cried I, "who are you? and why am I made your victim?"

"Look!" cried he, throwing the sombrero from his head, and approaching close to me, "look! know you not these features? They are those of him whose path you have crossed once, but shall never cross again!"

He seized hold of me as he spoke, with a fiendish grasp, and strove to hurl me headlong from the rock. I struggled with all the energy of desperation, and for a moment baffled the design. He released his hold round my body, and stepping back, stood an instant gazing on me with the glaring eyeballs of a tiger about to spring upon its prey; then darting towards me, he grappled me with both hands round the throat, and dragged me, despite my struggling, to the very verge of the precipice. With a powerful exertion of strength, which I was no longer able to resist, he dashed my body over the edge,

and held me out at arm's length above the dread abyss. The agony of years of wretchedness compressed into a single second, could not exceed the horror of the moment I remained so suspended. There was a small tree or bush which grew out of a cleft just beneath the ledge. In my despairing, frantic struggle, I caught hold of a branch of it, just at the critical instant when the Spaniard relaxed his grasp, intending to drop me down the fearful gulf. His purpose was again baffled for another moment of horror. He gnashed his teeth as he saw me swing off upon the fragile branch, which cracked and bent beneath my weight, and, at most, could save me from his fury but for a fleeting moment. That moment seemed too long for his impatient hate. He sprang to the very verge of the ledge, and placing his foot firmly on the tree, pressed it down with all his strength. In vain, with chattering teeth and horror-choked voice, I implored him to desist. He answered not, but stamped furiously on the tree. The root began to give way—the loosened dirt fell from around it—the trunk snapped, cracked, and separated—and the fiend set up an inhuman laugh, which rung in my ears like the mocking of a demon, as down—down—down I fell, through the chill, thick, pitchy air, till striking with a mighty force on the rocks beneath—I waked, and lo, it was a dream!

It was broad daylight. In my sleep I had rolled from

the heap of stones which had furnished me with my evening seat of meditation, and which, during my sleep, had supplied my imagination with abundant materials for yawning gulfs and chasms. The laugh of the infernal Spaniard turned out to be only a burst of innocent merriment at my plight from little Paul Messenger, a rosy, curly-haired midshipman, and one of the finest little fellows in the world. The matter was soon explained. The commodore, returning to the boat, and seeing me sleeping on a bed of my own choosing, as he expressed it, had chosen to punish me by leaving me to my slumbers. So shoving off, without waking me, he had returned to the ship; on reaching which, however, he gave the officer of the deck directions to send a boat for me at daylight. Little Paul, always ready to do a kind act, asked to go officer of her; and we pulled back to the frigate, laughing over my story of the imaginary adventures of the night.



MERRY TERRY.



MERRY TERRY.

His breast with wounds unnumbered riven,
His back to earth, his face to heaven,
Fallen Hassan lies—his unclosed eye
Yet lowering on his enemy.
As if the hour that sealed his fate,
Surviving left his quenchless hate :
And o'er him bends his foe, with brow
As dark as his that bled below.

Byron.

“COME, spin us a yarn, Jack, my boy,” said a curly-headed, rosy-checked young midshipman, to old Jack Palmer, one evening, as the vessel to which they were attached was running down the Spanish Main, before as sweet a breeze as ever filled a to’gallant-sail. Jack Palmer was an old sea-dog, and a clever fellow,—that is to say, in the Yankee sense of the word. He had seen all sorts of service, and knew all sorts of stories, which were perhaps not the less amusing for the nautical phraseology in which they were expressed. He was master’s mate of the gun-deck ; but when called upon for a story by Rosy Willy, (the name of the little reefer that had asked Jack for a yarn,) his business for the day